



Kentucky Personnel Cabinet Office of the Secretary

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Regional events provide free health screenings

Biometric screenings available to Kentucky Employees' Health Plan members

FRANKFORT, Ky. (Feb. 10, 2015) – The Kentucky Employees' Health Plan is touring the Commonwealth to provide biometric screenings at no cost to its members. Thirty-nine screening events are scheduled, and the first event takes place in Franklin County, February 17-19.

“To reference an old adage — an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure,” said Joe Cowles, KEHP commissioner. “We have watched this simple health screening bring critical issues to light, stop or slow deadly diseases, and help our members better manage their health status.”

KEHP members include more than 260,000 public, school board and local government employees, as well as retirees under age 65, and their dependents.

For several years, the KEHP has shown a deep commitment to improving members' health. In 2014, the KEHP further incentivized healthy behaviors by introducing wellness requirements in two health plan options. These LivingWell plans have the same or higher monthly rate than the standard plans, but provide lower coinsurance, deductibles and out-of-pocket maximums to members. This year, 86 percent of eligible employees chose one of the wellness plans, up from 81 percent last year.

The wellness plans require participants to complete a “LivingWell Promise” by taking either an online health assessment or, new for 2015, a biometric screening.

The biometric screening consists of a finger prick or lab work to measure cholesterol, blood glucose and blood pressure. Height, weight, and waist measurements are also collected. The health assessment consists of about 30 lifestyle questions, which provide a general overview of the member's health status and a personalized plan of action to improve or maintain good health.

Both are early steps members take as part of HumanaVitality, a data-driven wellness and rewards program designed to motivate members to make healthier choices.

A recent HumanaVitality study found improved health (as shown through lower health care costs and fewer unscheduled absences) among associates who actively participated in the program. The study concluded the largest impact on healthcare costs was on members with lifestyle-related chronic conditions like high blood pressure or diabetes. Engaged members with these conditions had 60 percent lower health claims costs than unengaged members with these conditions.ⁱ

“Unlike the health assessment, which can be completed anywhere a member has internet access, the biometric screenings require members to visit a provider location. Offering regional events makes completing this key screening even more convenient for many members,” said Cowles.

Primary care physicians, retail clinics, local health departments, Frankfort First Onsite, and worksite locations are alternatives for members who cannot attend a regional event.

The LivingWell plans go hand-in-hand with Governor Steve Beshear's recently created initiative, kyhealthnow, which aims to reduce Kentucky's dismal health rankings and habits through goals and strategies related to seven areas that include obesity, cancer and health insurance.

Additionally, KEHP offers many resources for tobacco cessation efforts, in support of Gov. Beshear's tobacco-free policy, which went into effect on state properties in November. KEHP resources include: A personal health coach, cessation classes, nicotine replacement therapies and incentives for getting healthier. These and many other resources, including Kentucky's own quit line – 1-800-QuitNow – can be found on the tobacco-free.ky.gov website.

The LivingWell Promise Tour will stop in nearly 30 counties, including: Anderson, Boone, Boyd, Boyle, Breathitt, Breckinridge, Bullitt, Christian, Daviess, Estill, Fayette, Franklin, Garrard, Harlan, Henderson, Henry, Jefferson, Knox, Laurel, Lincoln, Madison,

Magoffin, Mason, Oldham, Powell, Scott, Shelby, Spencer, Warren, and Whitley. For a detailed list of events, dates, times and locations, visit LivingWell.ky.gov/Pages/promiseevents.aspx.

For more information on the Personnel Cabinet's LivingWell program, visit LivingWell.ky.gov. For KEHP member information, visit KEHP.ky.gov.

ⁱ Unengaged members with lifestyle-related chronic conditions had 101 percent higher claims costs than the total population, while engaged members with these chronic conditions had 41 percent higher claims costs than the total population.

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Attention media: Attached are audio clips of Department of Employee Insurance Deputy Commissioner Jenny Goins responding to the below questions:

1. What is the advantage of having local LivingWell Promise events?
2. What's the purpose of a Vitality Check? Why do members need to get one?
3. How are Kentucky employees responding? What's their interest level and what does that mean for healthcare in Kentucky?
4. Is there any connection between the Kentucky Employees' Health plan and other health initiatives across the commonwealth? Why should the general public be concerned?

Also attached is a spreadsheet of events across the commonwealth, including locations, dates and times.